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A Government Ill Executed: The Decline of the Federal Service and How to Reverse It by Paul C. Light. Harvard University Press (<http://www.hup.harvard.edu>), 79 Garden Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02138, 2008, 288 pages, \$45.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-674-02808-1; 2009, 288 pages, \$18.95 (softcover), ISBN 978-0-674-0347-85.

A Government Ill Executed presents systematic inefficiencies in the federal bureaucracy and possible solutions. Author Paul Light drills down to institutional causes in order to seriously address the monumental problem of government inefficiency. The book belongs to a higher class of organizational-management literature than previous antibureaucracy diatribes because it details causes of inefficiency and provides significant statistical analysis to bolster Light's argument that a focused, streamlined government would be more efficient than the current one and would attract a higher-caliber public servant.

The author applies Alexander Hamilton's theory of good government to the present federal system. Instead of addressing government's limited mission to faithfully execute its laws, Light examines the paradox of unpopular, inefficient performance juxtaposed against an ever-increasing demand for more government services. Each chapter treats one of the seven Hamiltonian characteristics of good government as outlined in *Federalist No. 70*. Additionally, the concluding chapter, "Reversing the Decline," proposes ways to do just that: reverse the steady erosion of governmental capabilities instead of merely attack the federal service. The book serves as a blueprint for a true government reformer to reshape the federal service into a more efficient corps

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closer to its foundational roots as originally envisioned by Hamilton.

Based upon 10 years of Light's research conducted at the Brookings Institution and New York University, *A Government Ill Executed* attempts to rate the number of federal missions that represent a near-all-encompassing agenda. These missions, from after-school programs to national defense initiatives, are both starved and expanded for short-term gain by office seekers with little regard for the long-term consequences of execution. This accordion effect is reflected by a current department's 64 layers of leadership between the secretary and the associate deputy assistant administrator (most business firms recommend six layers). Although Light convincingly argues that more leaders do not mean more leadership, the table that presents such data is misleading since all federal departments' employment of appointees isn't exactly parallel. However, he does not weaken his argument by making trivial points about whether the Department of Agriculture has 60 positions and the Department of Defense has 65. His point is clear: a great deal of oversight hampers organizational efficiency.

One ratio is particularly scary: 90 percent of the Senior Executive Service is eligible to retire in 2016! Regarding the "retirement tsunami" of baby boomers leaving the federal workforce, which is already overwhelming the federal hiring process, Light suggests evaluating every vacated position and eliminating the ones no longer needed. Unfortunately, the process of evaluating positions may devolve into yet another bureaucratic creation: new positions to eliminate old positions.

Notably, the author fails to mention Frederick Winslow Taylor, the father of scientific management. Although Light does discuss multiple derivative studies based upon Taylor's work, the book nevertheless suffers from its omission of major (and likely valuable) input from an intellectual leader of the early efficiency movement. If the author wished to emphasize efficiency, he should have acknowledged Taylor's theories.

I recommend *A Government Ill Executed* even though it rehashes issues familiar to frustrated readers involved in working relationships with the federal government. However, Light pointedly observes that government will become more efficient only after thoroughly evaluating federal missions rather than merely tweaking them for short-term political gain. In turn, public service must make its careers more attractive to

America's best and brightest in order to close the loop in government efficiency.

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The Lost Battalion of Tet: Breakout of the 2/12th Cavalry at Hue by Charles A. Krohn. Naval Institute Press (<http://www.usni.org/naulinstitutepress/index.asp>), 291 Wood Road, Annapolis, Maryland 21402-5034, 2008, 210 pages, \$21.56 (softcover), ISBN 1591144345.

Mission: (1) Seal off city on west and north with right flank based on Song Huong. (2) Destroy enemy forces attempting to either reinforce or escape from Hue Citadel.

—Major General John J. Tolson, USA
Commanding First Cavalry Division (Airmobile)

Those orders, handwritten on a notepad-sized piece of stationery, sent Col Richard Sweet and the 2nd Battalion, 12th Cavalry (2/12) on a doomed mission to reach the South Vietnamese city of Hue during the North Vietnamese Army's (NVA) Tet offensive in the spring of 1968. Revised and released to coincide with the 40th anniversary of the Tet offensive, *The Lost Battalion of Tet* recounts events as they unfold from the perspective of author Charles Krohn as a participant, serving as the battalion S-2 (intelligence officer). It also—and more importantly—addresses those events from his view as an experienced military officer and historian working to capture valuable lessons for future military leaders. In the middle of the 1st Air Cavalry Division's inadequately planned and poorly executed move north from Bon Son and the Que Son Valley to the area around Hue, South Vietnam erupted under the aggressive attack of the NVA's Tet offensive. Without adequate supplies or artillery support (both delayed as a result of the move) and hampered by bad weather and the Tet offensive, the 2/12 encountered and found itself surrounded by numerically superior elements of the 6th NVA regiment guarding NVA headquarters for the forces assaulting Hue.

His forces surrounded and having little-to-no hope of relief or assistance from a paralyzed support system, Colonel Sweet decides to leave behind the battalion's dead and attempt a night breakout, seeking refuge in nearby mountains rather than stay in place and be overwhelmed.

Although critics have often second-guessed this decision, only through Colonel Sweet's leadership, as well as the heroism, bravery, and skill of the men of the 2/12, were they able to escape the death trap. For their gallantry, members of the unit received the Presidential Unit Citation and 11 Distinguished Service Crosses.

A solidly researched book, *The Lost Battalion of Tet* includes numerous valuable appendices, maps, and photographs that add significantly to the text. Krohn has written an excellent work on two distinct levels. First, his direct experience clearly comes through in this gripping story. Easily read, even for those with minimal knowledge of Army operations, the book gives the reader a valuable look into the life of a US infantryman in Vietnam, as well as an enlightening view of the Vietnam War from the ground level. A skillful writer, the author pulls his audience into an engrossing and often heart-wrenching story of heroism. Second, Krohn provides a candid and critical analysis of the US Army's failure to support the 2/12. As a Soldier of the lost battalion of Tet, he holds nothing back in his criticism of the failure and lapses of command of the 1st Air Cavalry's support structure. Although some readers may view the author's criticism as personal attacks, it should serve as a valuable lesson to all military leaders that they must be prepared to react when the worst happens and must endeavor to prevent such unconscionable events from occurring. Both a historical work and a study of leadership and command at all levels, *The Lost Battalion of Tet* is a must-read for all military officers.

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America's Army: A Model for Interagency Effectiveness by Brig Gen Zeb B. Bradford Jr., USA, Retired, and Lt Gen Frederic J. Brown, USA, Retired, PhD. Praeger Security International, Greenwood Publishing Group (<http://psi.praeger.com>), 88 Post Road West, P.O. Box 5007, Westport, Connecticut 06881-5007, 2008, 268 pages, \$49.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-313-35024-5.

America's Army presents an argument for utilizing the US Army as a model of effectiveness for improving the interagency process among all levels of government, allies and coalitions, and nongovernmental organizations and industry.

The authors use the Army's current organizational transition and evolution to suggest "lessons learned" to develop policy both vertically and horizontally, candidly admitting a land-power perspective as they develop their thesis. They spend considerable time detailing major tenets of the Army Game Plan for the future and advocate increased attention to and expansion of resources to meet the Army's needs.

Generals Bradford and Brown bring much expertise to their subject, having authored an earlier work, *The U.S. Army in Transition* (1973)—a post-Vietnam review of Army organization and culture. Both have extensive command-and-staff experience through virtually all levels of the military establishment.

The book details the composition of the Total Army (active and reserve components as well as civilian), describing the history and relationship of the Army and the citizenry of the country. Making substantial use of jargon and acronyms that may give the casual reader difficulty, the volume examines in depth the concept of the Long War, as well as ways the Army has adapted, and proposes how it should evolve in the future. The authors present strong arguments for expansion of the Army's leadership-and-development model for building teams of leaders. In addition to the Army Game Plan and its imperatives, they closely examine the Army Force Generation Model and expend considerable effort in describing Army Knowledge Management Efforts, including the Battle Command Knowledge System, which integrates structured professional forums, knowledge nets, and action teams. Generals Bradford and Brown not only cover defense of the homeland throughout their book but also devote an entire chapter to the subject. Furthermore, they emphasize the Army's history and linkage to state and local authorities, most notably with the Army National Guard and Reserve forces, and discuss responses to weapons of mass destruction as well as disaster scenarios.

Emphasizing the success of the Army's evolution to meet the national-security challenges of the Long War and rapid globalization, *America's Army* does not spend much time on failures and less-than-effective accomplishments. When the authors do discuss clear failures, they attribute these misfortunes to a lack of leadership within the Army (e.g., Walter Reed, p. 234, note 1) or a combination of inadequate training and a failure of leadership (e.g., Abu Ghraib, pp. 122–24). In the less-than-effective category (e.g., difficulties with nation building and occu-

pation following the liberation of Iraq), the generals lay the bulk of responsibility on the decisions of civilian leadership (p. 202) and incorrect planning assumptions.

They assert that, ultimately, land power is the decisive component in virtually any national-security challenge, recognizing the need for jointness in most operations but relegating air and sea power to supporting or transitory roles. Declaring that "history is replete with examples of overestimating the effects of bombardment and air strikes on an enemy's will to resist" (p. 34), Generals Bradford and Brown cite the failure of the Israeli Defense Forces to break the power and will of Hezbollah in southern Lebanon as the latest example of this overestimation. Curiously, they make no mention of Operation Allied Force until much later in the book, there asserting that "America's Army has been under-resourced for years by two consecutive administrations mesmerized by the lure of high technology permitting quick, cheap victory—Kosovo, Afghanistan, and Iraq—through top-down net-centric use of firepower—commonly air power" (p. 180). Additionally, in the preface, the authors refer to James Locher's leadership in the bipartisan Project on National Security but don't tie any of their propositions to the project's call for national-security reform.

America's Army is relevant to the Air Force community insofar as it details, in great depth, the perspective of land-power advocates in the national-security arena. It is important that air-power advocates understand such a perspective in the competition for resources and ideas.

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Special Operations and Strategy: From World War II to the War on Terrorism by James D. Kiras. Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group (<http://www.routledge.com>), 270 Madison Avenue, New York, New York 10016, 2007, 248 pages, \$39.95 (softcover), ISBN 978-0-415-45949-5; \$160.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-418-70212-6.

At first glance, James Kiras's *Special Operations and Strategy* looks to be another version of *Where Eagles Dare*, celebrating the highly successful and supersecret world of special ops. Very quickly, however, one realizes that this is no salute to the glories of special operations but a critical analysis that examines the varying degrees of effectiveness of such operations throughout the last 60

years. Making use of specific case studies, Dr. Kiras delves into his theories about special operations forces (SOF), their effectiveness at the operational and strategic levels, their misuse, and the potential role they can and should play in extended campaigns of strategic attrition.

Dr. Kiras states that, in the past, military authorities at strategic levels have viewed SOF as having "Great Raid" potential—ending a conflict in one swift blow, single-handedly collapsing the enemy's support system, degrading his morale, and destroying his leadership. In retrospect, though, these special missions have never realized their intended results but have proved unproductive due to poor operational planning and poor understanding of unconventional forces and their structure.

To illustrate his points, Dr. Kiras cites several case studies—most of them from World War II—easily dissecting and pointing out the misuse or misunderstanding of special operations tactics in a strategic sense. Highlighting prime examples of this ineffective strategic outlook, the author mentions the absolute strategic failure of Operation Chastise, which destroyed the Mohne and Eder dams, to degrade Germany's industrial production ability, and the inadequate use and uncoordinated strikes of the British Special Air Service (SAS) before and during the invasion of Normandy.

However, this book does not concern itself entirely with picking apart failed missions and lamenting the incorrect usage of SOF. Rather, it delves into learning about and developing effective, modern special operations strategies for the future, based on past mistakes.

To contrast the poor understanding of special operations strategy and offer examples of its correct application, Dr. Kiras also analyzes specific successes in the SOF community, thus demonstrating that, when understood, special tactics units can prove just as—or more—effective in degrading the enemy than conventional forces. For instance, by using coordinated strikes on specific targets and enabling conventional forces to strike harder and faster than previously thought, the SAS prevented the Deutsches Afrika-Korps from conducting effective warfare during the North Africa campaign.

Special Operations and Strategy delivers its message clearly and in detail. Specifically, it asserts that special operations are more effective in conjunction with conventional forces. Applying strategic attrition, such operations include coordinated targeting of the enemy's resources, communications, and leadership, thereby destroying his ability to conduct war. Pitted against these difficult-to-strike yet vul-

nerable targets, special operations can deliver disproportionate losses to the enemy, ultimately speeding up the degradation of his capacity to deliver effective offensive and defensive operations on a strategic level.

In the midst of today's ever-evolving and fluid battlefield, special operations have taken on an important role. Demand for the military's—including the US Air Force's—special units and their operators is at an all-time high. We can produce incredible effects when we understand and use our special units correctly. Used poorly or inappropriately, however, these highly trained and elite units will never reach their full potential, thus resulting in prolonged campaigns as well as wasted manpower and resources.

Dr. Kiras provides a valid and thorough overview of special operations strategies. His theories are sound, and their foundations solid. Not a point-by-point examination of "Great Raids," *Special Operations and Strategy* is simply a bare-bones academic analysis. Readers looking for a well-written, in-depth treatment of special operations in both past and future conflicts should add this book to their library.

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Danger Close: Tactical Air Controllers in Afghanistan and Iraq, Texas A&M University Military History Series, no. 113, by Steve Call. Texas A&M University Press Consortium (<http://www.tamu.edu/upress>), John H. Lindsey Building, Lewis Street, 4354 TAMU, College Station, Texas 77843-4354, 2007, 272 pages, \$29.95 (hardcover), ISBN 1585446246.

In *Danger Close*, Dr. Steve Call writes a timely history that traces the development of tactical air control parties (TACP) during the ongoing war on terror. Through firsthand accounts, he skillfully defines military victory by means of what he calls the air-ground dynamic. Avoiding the tiresome concept of transformation, this book offers an upfront view of modern combat fought by warriors who often carry a rifle in one hand and a handset in the other. Call follows the development of the TACP in the war on terror as a means of understanding the greater institutional and technological changes recently made in deploying close air support (CAS) and provides insight into the evolution of that mission. Through this exciting story of

TACPs and the rapid technological and organizational changes they represent, the author reminds us of certain timeless principles necessary for victory and fills a void by analyzing modern combat from a tactical viewpoint.

Dr. Call, whose background includes service in both the Air Force (as a B-52 pilot and a squadron commander) and the Army (as a liaison officer), is uniquely qualified to trace the background of the intra- and interservice debates that emerged after Operation Desert Storm, as well as the subsequent application of technology to CAS. Innovations used by the TACPs—such as strike coordination and reconnaissance aircraft and new computer programs such as Falcon-View—provide opportunities for unprecedented accuracy in firepower. The author cites the kill-box interdiction system, which replaced the fire support coordination line, as an example of the organizational changes that TACPs worked with to implement this technology. He effectively outlines such developments while masterfully tracing the roles of TACPs.

The ingenuity and flexibility of TACPs, whether serving with special forces on horseback in Afghanistan or using bomb-crater analysis to establish back azimuths to enemy firing locations, demonstrate their role as the vital nexus of the emerging air-ground dynamic. TACPs possess high degrees of intelligence, initiative, and flexibility, as well as open access to commanders and the ability to communicate the usefulness of CAS to them. In part, the corps-shaping strategy developed for Iraq reflected the imagination and openness of leaders aided by capable TACPs that clearly showed the benefits of CAS. *Danger Close* repeatedly affirms the competency of TACPs under extremely trying conditions, balancing such modern-battlefield dilemmas as rules of engagement, safety of friendly forces, utilization of terrain, and, in many cases, anticipation of command decisions, all the while under global media scrutiny.

Dr. Call offers applicable battlefield lessons for future warriors, describing an interesting dilemma known as “Predator crack”—an overreliance on remotely piloted aerial vehicles—and pointing out the myopic view of the battlefield it can present to the undiscerning commander. He also settles the historic debate over which branch of the service can win a war alone. His conclusion? None of them! Referring to the recipe for victory repeatedly used in Afghanistan and Iraq, the author terms it an exploitation of the enemy’s “air-ground dilemma” (p. 237). That is, the proper

maneuvering of ground forces compels the enemy to react and move to repel the assault. Existing technology can see this movement and then kill the enemy. If the enemy does not move or mass, ground forces can outmaneuver and destroy him piecemeal. The TACP serves as the focal point for the coordination of this effort, backed by other observers flying above. Dr. Call forcefully concludes by citing his concern about the danger of TACP successes being copied by various services eager to get in on the action. He contends that if we sacrifice individual experience to institutional expediency, an inability to deconflict aircraft—not to mention other dangerously counterproductive conditions—could arise.

Danger Close does not mire itself in theory but offers students real tactical lessons about the use of supporting arms in modern warfare. Aside from the paucity of maps and absence of a bibliography, it effectively fills a gap in literature on the war on terror by examining modern warriors as well as the larger and increasingly joint service culture they represent.

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Space Warfare and Defense: A Historical Encyclopedia and Research Guide by Bert Chapman.

ABC-CLIO (<http://www.abc-clio.com>), P.O. Box 1911, Santa Barbara, California 93116-1911, 2008, 403 pages, \$95.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-59884-006-3.

Space Warfare and Defense covers a range of topics, from Project Corona to the Brilliant Pebbles Program to a listing of the most recent published literature on the military use of space. Asst. Prof. Bert Chapman, a government information librarian at Purdue University, deserves commendation for authoring this impressive work, which fills a gap in space-warfare scholarship. This significant and comprehensive treatise provides layman and expert alike a voluminous amount of data, both historical and contemporary, on space weapons and their development.

The book’s 10 chapters are divided into two parts, the first beginning with a chronology of momentous dates in the history of space warfare. This leads to in-depth coverage of US military space policy through key space programs and weapons development from the Eisenhower to the Bush administrations. Also included is a little-

known and surprising plan proposed by the US Army for establishing a moon base by 1966. Additionally, this part enlightens readers on US military space programs and the development of space weapons, from the Manned Orbiting Laboratory of the 1960s to the present YAL 1A Laser Project. Each particular data entry commences with the historical background of each system or program and concludes with remarks on its current status.

The author then delves into the space weapons programs of Russia, China, and the European nations, tracing the programs' roots from the post-World War II period through the Cold War to the present day. The final chapter of part 1 tackles some of the international and US laws on space such as the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Communications Satellite Act, and the Moon Treaty, among others.

The second part constitutes another gem, offering an overview of various US Department of Defense agencies, think tanks, and foreign research institutions concerned with space warfare. It covers their activities, latest publications, and online addresses.

Well written and researched, *Space Warfare and Defense* is supported by a number of photographs and supplemented by a 17-page glossary. Each chapter provides a list of further reading and online references on the subject. The book will serve as a valuable primary resource for researchers, space enthusiasts, policy makers, employees of space agencies, officers either currently on staff with space commands or NASA or awaiting assignment, and individuals seeking information about the relationship of space to national security.

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Reflections of a Technocrat: Managing Defense, Air, and Space Programs during the Cold War by Dr. John L. McLucas with Kenneth J. Alnwick and Lawrence R. Benson. Air University Press (<http://aupress.maxwell.af.mil>), 155 N. Twining Street, Maxwell AFB, Alabama 36112-6026, 2006, 390 pages, \$33.00 (softcover), ISBN 1-58566-156-2. Available free from <http://www.au.af.mil/au/aul/aupress/Books/McLucas/McLucas.pdf>.

A standard dictionary definition of *technocrat*—"a technical expert, especially one in a

managerial or administrative position"—does not do justice to the accomplishments of Dr. John McLucas, the 10th secretary of the Air Force, as outlined in his book, *Reflections of a Technocrat*. To call this an autobiography is also to undersell the broader historical context it provides. Neither is it a simple historical record of dry lessons learned. Dr. McLucas writes in an engaging style that shies away from sermonizing. The narrative is so seamless and absorbing that it seems that the reader is having a conversation with an important uncle whose life's work was never fully explained to him or her. Upon listening to Dr. McLucas's personal history, one can't help describing it as the life experiences of Forrest Gump (the author is a self-admitted product of the "Deep South") (p. 4) augmented by the innovative dossier of Kelly Johnson's Skunk Works. McLucas's unassuming nature would probably downplay both references affably. However, his sense of service to the nation comes through as his most enduring and admirable quality: "I believe that when citizens are offered the chance to serve in positions that can deal effectively with major issues facing the country, they should make themselves available" (p. 59). The main theme of *Reflections of a Technocrat* is the way McLucas repeatedly made himself available throughout his life. His first transition was from the life of an academic to that of a naval officer during World War II. After the war, he established himself as an entrepreneur and engineer in the civilian world, experiencing the life of a military contractor firsthand. Dr. McLucas followed this up with a string of successful, diverse roles in and around government, against the background of the Cold War, serving in the Defense Department, NATO, and MITRE Corporation, as well as serving as undersecretary of the Air Force (leading the then-classified National Reconnaissance Office), secretary of the Air Force, and, finally, administrator of the Federal Aviation Administration. By examining this impressive lifetime of service, we can develop a true definition of the title *technocrat*.

The breadth and depth of Dr. McLucas's experiences guarantee that anyone familiar with the evolution of airpower will recognize innumerable challenges and successes, both contemporary and historical. Reading about the Tactical Fighter Experimental calls to mind the Joint Strike Fighter. Interservice rivalries he faced over the OV-10 aircraft mimic those involving the Joint Cargo Aircraft of today. His time in France with NATO provided challenges similar to the ones

facing coalition and allied leaders in the twenty-first century. Acquisition difficulties, force modernization under constrained and shrinking budgets, transformation initiatives, secrecy versus bureaucracy, and parallels between the Cold War and the global war on terror—they're all in this book.

Frustratingly, the reader has to divert to other sources to learn the rest of the story. Because the story line follows Dr. McLucas's life, it is mostly left up to the reader to research the details of how programs and circumstances played out after his departure; the book relates only a few gratifying vignettes on the evolution of the National Reconnaissance Office and space systems into the late twentieth century. Sadly, the book does not have a happy ending. The final chapter is not Dr. McLucas's; he passed away on 1 December 2002. In this last installment, the reader is privy to a final look at the life of this technocrat: a series of corporate, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental air and space efforts inspired by his "techno" background and informed by his "cratic" experiences.

Reflections of a Technocrat appeals not only to a wide cross section of the Air Force but also to the greater defense community. For the military historian, Dr. McLucas provides informed insight into technology's coming-of-age period in the armed forces, particularly the Air Force. Air and space power advocates will recognize and appreciate the systems and organizations one or two generations removed from today's service culture. Finally, current and future military leaders will find the obstacles (e.g., a nation at war abroad, intertwined with challenging domestic issues) and advice in this book as applicable today as they were four decades ago.

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A Reckless Grace: An Account of Pilots and Their Planes from the Jennys to the Jets by Margaret Taliaferro. Lulu Press (<http://www.lulu.com>), Lulu Enterprises, 3101 Hillsborough Street, Raleigh, North Carolina 27607-5436, 2008, 112 pages, \$24.48 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-4357-0955-3.

In *A Reckless Grace*, Margaret Taliaferro not only describes aviation from its early years through the 1960s but also offers a biography of former aviator

Champe Taliaferro, whose career ranged from the time just prior to World War I to his retirement from American Airlines in 1964. Everyone, especially aviation enthusiasts, will enjoy this exciting and exquisitely researched book.

The author recounts many stories involving aviators whose lives ended early due to their carelessness or negligence, including accounts of Champe's mishaps as a young pilot. For example, he and a fellow aviator made an inverted crash into a lake in an attempt to perform stunts over a train, trying to impress a young lady (pp. 6, 53–56). Reckless abandonment and intoxication contributed to the incident. Though severely injured, Champe recovered to fly again.

The book explores the attitudes and culture that make and define traditional pilots, many of whom had the attitude that "money was cheap. Who cared about it anyway? Why hoard it when it's a well-known fact that you can't take it with you, and your departure date might be very imminent? Like tomorrow." Poker games, dice, heavy drinking, and other pleasures reflected these pilots' disdain for traditional values (p. 68).

As the focus of the narrative, Champe exemplifies both good and bad pilots (who often end up dead). The author addresses principles ignored by many of Champe's friends who died while he survived: "Never try to stretch a glide when your speed is slow and you're losing altitude. . . . Never take unnecessary risks. . . . Never underestimate a flight. . . . Never fly when the odds are too high against you. . . . The flight is never over until the plane draws up to the passenger ramp" (p. 91).

Though an interesting read, *A Reckless Grace* often becomes somewhat dry when it delves into changes in the aviation industry. For readers not attuned to aviation, the author's discussion of the intricacies of aerobatic flight maneuvers and the technical aspects of cross-country flights—including instrument-landing systems, nondirectional beacons, and ground-controlled approach radar—may seem too detailed.

In the first half of the book, which not only relates Champe's experiences as a stunt flyer but also offers many examples of pilots meeting untimely deaths, the author captures the excitement and flair of flight, effectively piquing the interest of both established and aspiring military fighter pilots. Indeed, Taliaferro's experiences appeal to all pilots as they follow his career from flying airmail routes to flying passengers for commercial airlines, all the while filling the role of meteorologist, helmsman, and commander

(pp. 45–52, 57–63, and 65–75). Appropriately, the author emphasizes the importance of these roles to flight safety.

In these pages, the reader also learns about the danger of pride, arrogance, and envy—traits that define many of the pilots who met their doom at the controls of an aircraft; they also explain why some pilots live the way they do. Clearly, these life lessons have an application far beyond aviation.

An excellent read, *A Reckless Grace* should hold the interest of all pilots, civil and military. Here, readers will find exciting stories of barnstormers and airmail carriers as well as examples of the dangers of taking a cavalier approach to flight. Although this book may serve as a testament to the unique nature of pilots, it also offers a reality check that will allow young pilots to become old pilots. I highly recommend *A Reckless Grace*, especially to aspiring and current pilots.

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Contrails over the Mojave: The Golden Age of Jet Flight Testing at Edwards Air Force Base

by George J. Marrett. Naval Institute Press (<http://www.usni.org/naivalinstitute/press/index.asp>), 291 Wood Road, Annapolis, Maryland 21402, 2008, 264 pages, \$29.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-1-59114-511-0.

Judging from the gushing praise on the dust jacket and many online reviews of George Marrett's *Contrails over the Mojave*, I was expecting quite a read. Unfortunately, this slim volume did not live up to my perhaps overheated expectations. I was immediately struck by the fact that Marrett's career narrative began in the 1960s. Describing the early 1960s as the "Golden Age of Jet Flight Testing" seemed, at best, an overstatement and, at worst, a disservice to the truly astonishing advances made a decade before. Even the author briefly acknowledges this fact. As he put it, "By any standard, the 1950s was a remarkable period in the history of aviation . . . where, if a concept seemed feasible—or even just desirable—it was evaluated" (p. 7). Perhaps *Jet Flight Testing at the End of the Golden Era* might have been a more appropriate subtitle for this volume.

This is at least the third and possibly final book in what is arguably a larger history of George Marrett the pilot. As a series, his previ-

ous books, *Cheating Death: Combat Air Rescues in Vietnam and Laos* (Smithsonian Books, 2003) and *Testing Death: Hughes Aircraft Test Pilots and Cold War Weaponry* (Praeger Security International, 2006), chronicle a long and distinguished career of both military- and civilian-engineering test flying. Unfortunately, this book, as the apparent chronological bridge between the other two works, is a difficult read, leaving this reader disappointed.

As Marrett freely admits in the preface, his book incorporates a number of previously published stories, one having appeared in *Flight Journal* (June 2000) under the title "Chasing the XB-70 Valkyrie" and another, "Sky High," concerning his experiences with the NF-104, in the Smithsonian's *Air and Space Magazine* (November 2002). Similarly, "Defending the Golden Gate" (F-101B), "Space Cadets," "Don't Kill Yourself," and "Sore Feet" all found their way into this book (sans the pictures that add so much to magazine articles). Unfortunately, the rest of the book appears to be built of similar stuff, crafted lovingly, albeit often incompletely, with material recompiled from various aviation periodicals.

As a longtime reader and avid collector of air and space as well as military books and other publications, I have enjoyed many shorter tales of hairy missions, good and bad pilots, and their aircraft. However, in my view a book should be held to a higher standard. *Contrails over the Mojave* seems rather more an anthology of short biographies of "folks I flew with" than a complete chronology of the author's experiences during the period. The disjointed grouping of these biographical essays takes away from, rather than adds to, the story of Marrett's maturing as a test pilot during the early stages of his aviation career. Unfortunately, trying to reconcile the two approaches—chronological narrative versus individual biographies—proved sufficiently distracting that the underlying story was almost lost.

One of the supporting players in the drama of aircraft testing in the 1960s rather than one of the leads, Marrett never flew the cutting-edge (he might have said "bleeding-edge") experimental aircraft—the X-15s, XB-70s, or YF-12s/SR-71s—that so inflamed the imagination of that era's and subsequent eras' pilots. He does little to "blow his own horn" on the work he did in support of flight testing at Edwards AFB, California, and one gets the mistaken impression of a lightweight in the flight-test community, relegated to flying aircraft that were not the most glamorous—or merely chasing the ones that were.

This was, no doubt, an unintentional minimization. The required flying was (and is) no less arduous or dangerous, as the anecdote concerning the XB-70 “photo opportunity” collision (pp. 143–45) so aptly illustrates. Assessing the design deficiencies of some aircraft that would eventually become part of the nation’s front line of defense in the Cold War, as well as serving—sometimes with distinction, sometimes not—in the Vietnam conflict, was critically important work rather than a mundane task, as it came across to this reader. Perhaps in retrospect this was the underlying message: that (to mangle Milton) “they also serve who fly the F-4, F-5, and F-111.” Unfortunately, this message was so well camouflaged that when I learned that there was substantially more to the story of Marrett’s flying life than alluded to in this book (in the epilogue and, no doubt, chronicled more expansively in “Testing Death”), I was truly surprised.

On balance, *Contrails over the Mojave* certainly has bright spots—items that were uniquely George Marrett and that contributed to my understanding of the larger events at Edwards and the world at that time. The saga of the live missiles on board his cross-country Voodoo (pp. 37–40) was humorous in the description of a young lieutenant’s dilemma, and the glimpse of how nuclear war might have come to California, provided by the Cuban missile crisis (pp. 48–52), was altogether chilling. Sadly, other snippets were of interest but of insufficient detail to do more than whet the appetite. One particularly unfinished story caught my attention: Marrett’s emergency landing of a NORDD (NO RaDiO) T-38 on the “wrong” lake bed (p. 126). (In an era before cellular telephones, they were down without communications, unremarked in the middle of nowhere; how exactly *did* they get home?)

Overall, I found *Contrails over the Mojave* an uneven book, though assuredly one having substantial wheat among the chaff. Judging from the acclaim of such aviation notables as Walter Boyne and Richard Hallion, Marrett’s long career has been of considerable interest to the community. Perhaps considered in the context of a three-volume body of work, it might measure up to those accolades and this reader’s expectations. Whether my curiosity to prove that thesis will lead me to read Marrett’s other books remains to be seen.

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Leave No Man Behind: The Saga of Combat Search and Rescue by George Galdorisi and Tom Phillips. Zenith Press (<http://www.zenithpress.com>), 729 Prospect Avenue, Osceola, Wisconsin 54020, 2008, 656 pages, \$30.00 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-7603-2392-2.

George Galdorisi and Tom Phillips’s book *Leave No Man Behind* is an in-depth treatise on combat search and rescue (CSAR), the efforts that our military forces make to recover personnel isolated behind enemy lines. Both authors served long careers as US Navy helicopter pilots and are well versed in this subject. Using their personal knowledge and extensive research skills, they have crafted an excellent collection of rescue vignettes that they weave into a longer tale of successes and failures in this very important mission area. I know both of these gentlemen and have watched this project evolve.

Starting with the birth of aviation, they show how the mission and the equipment to carry it out have developed through our nation’s conflicts. Their treatment of early efforts in World War I is illuminating, as is the coverage of rescue in World War II, which includes ample data on US Navy efforts in the Pacific—an area little reported to this point.

The real heart of the story focuses on rescue operations from the Korean conflict to the present. Galdorisi and Phillips take us through early rescue attempts in Korea and the subsequent development of units dedicated to the mission. After recounting the armistice, they offer a “reckoning”—an assessment of the total rescue efforts in the war, analyzing what it all meant. After showing how rescue forces were allowed to wane after the war, the authors essentially follow the same script for the long war in Southeast Asia. This series of chapters, 260 pages long, provides an intense and detailed look at that conflict, followed by another “reckoning” to tally up accomplishments and costs.

After using this construct again for Operation Desert Storm, though, the story thins out, for straightforward reasons. First, the fact that we have not had another conflict that matches the number of aircraft losses suffered in Southeast Asia or even Desert Storm has led to a decreased need for CSAR missions. Second, in later conflicts, special operations forces performed many of our rescue missions. For obvious reasons, little can be said openly and in any real detail about them. Those stories remain to be released.

The authors have made a huge contribution to the CSAR body of knowledge. To this point, most historical writing on this subject has focused on the efforts of US Air Force rescue units simply because that service has always had an excellent institutional collection policy that has generated a body of knowledge ripe for historical analysis and writing. From the Air Force perspective, historians have subsequently produced great studies of rescue in Korea, Southeast Asia, and Desert Storm. No other service has produced any such comprehensive writing. In this work, the authors optimized those Air Force collections. Going well beyond that, though, they visited old Navy unit archives and veterans in an effort to eloquently lay out the efforts of US Navy rescue units and personnel. I salute the authors for this exciting and original work!

I am a little disappointed, however, that the book contains so few pictures. Good shots of the aircraft, people, and places mentioned in the narrative would add to the presentation. I suggest, too, that work like this requires good maps to help the reader understand the geography of each of the combat theaters involved.

Overall, though, I think that the authors have created a fine document on CSAR and a very interesting historical work. I highly recommend it to anyone with a particular interest in the mission area or even military history in general. To Galdorisi and Phillips I say, "Bravo Zulu," and hope that they have a follow-on opportunity to expand this work with another volume on the subject.

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Base Politics: Democratic Change and the U.S.

Military Overseas by Alexander Cooley.
Cornell University Press (<http://www.cornellpress.cornell.edu>), 750 Cascadilla Street, Ithaca, New York 14851-6525, 2008, 328 pages, \$29.95 (hardcover), ISBN 978-0-8014-4605-4.

Following the Second World War, the United States developed a series of robust overseas bases that serve as the so-called tip of the spear to carry out US policy. The United States maintains these bases for a variety of reasons—which have changed over time—but undeniably they

play an integral role in how the US government implements policy vis-à-vis the rest of the world.

Author Alexander Cooley offers an intricate theoretical set to help explain the relationship between host nations and the United States with regard to military basing. He explains how at different times for different states, US bases can serve as "political hot potatoes" whereas at other times, surprisingly, they are simply nonissues. Additionally, he offers some keen analysis of two-level politics—the idea that the face a leader presents to the United States on basing issues can be very different from the one presented to the domestic body politic.

One of Cooley's key arguments concerns the domestic political situation within the state itself, irrelative to factors one might initially think important, such as the host country's size (whether in terms of geographical area or population) or stability. The author maintains that such matters as the credibility of the ruling regime and the need for economic stimulus from the US military presence, whether predicated on the spending of service members or actual injections of cash and goods from the US government, are equally important.

Aside from the overall theoretical outlay of Cooley's research, he offers valuable, in-depth comparative analysis of case studies of hosts such as the Philippines, Japan, Korea, and the Azores. These studies breathe life into his theoretical approach, lending validity to the author's powerful hypotheses. Additionally, the breadth of the research lends rigor to Cooley's claims by demonstrating their applicability across both time and geography. That this book should have a serious scholarly impact on research into international relations and assessment of the effect of these bases will come as no surprise.

Boasting considerable utility in explaining relationships between the United States and the countries that host its overseas bases, this book deserves immediate assimilation into professional military education. Its explanatory power—and its new perspective on how and why these relationships do or do not work—cannot be overstated. Well-written and thoroughly researched, *Base Politics* is a winner.

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